Inspection Report

Park Management Corporation
Six Flags Discovery Kingdom
1001 Fairgrounds Drive
Vallejo, CA 94589

Customer ID: **27924**
Certificate: **93-C-0809**
Site: 001
PARK MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION
Date: May-12-2014

2.40 (a) (2)

ATTENDING VETERINARIAN AND ADEQUATE VETERINARY CARE (DEALERS AND EXHIBITORS).

There are three veterinarians employed by the facility, either full-time, or in a consulting capacity. The attending veterinarian and the other veterinarians have expressed concerns about husbandry and medical issues, and those concerns had not received an appropriate response. The administrative staff confirms that the authority of the attending veterinarian was previously unclear, and is now taking steps to assure that the attending veterinarian has the appropriate authority.

Disagreements between different branches of animal care staff and management, on issues such as water quality and medical procedures, can put the well-being of the animals at risk. The attending veterinarian must have the appropriate authority to ensure the provision of adequate veterinary care and to oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care and use. The facility should continue to work and function in a cooperative manner in order to ensure the best care for the animals.

Corrected at the time of inspection.

3.101 (a) (3)

FACILITIES, GENERAL.

The MRC enclosure where two dolphin calves died earlier this year, was inspected on 5/12/14. There were several areas where paint and / or the underlying surface had peeled or cracked off. Also there were several places with rust stains trailed down the wall into the pool. These areas are accessible to the dolphins, and suggest that contaminants may be entering the water.

Exposure to contaminants could affect water quality, and be harmful to the animals. All surfaces in a primary enclosure must be constructed of durable, nontoxic materials that facilitate cleaning, and disinfection as appropriate, sufficient to maintain acceptable water quality. All surfaces must be maintained in good repair as part of a regular, ongoing maintenance program.

An overall plan to make repairs on marine mammal enclosures has been reviewed, and the repairs are to be completed by February 26, 2015.

Prepared By: PAMELA SMITH, D.V.M.
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Title: VETERINARY MEDICAL OFFICER Inspector 6036
Date: Nov-26-2014

Received By: (b)(6),(b)(7)(c)
Title:
Date: Nov-26-2014

Inspection Report Explanation: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/IR_Explanation.pdf

Inspection Report

3.106 (a)

WATER QUALITY.

There have been two dolphin calves born at this facility this year, both have died, and water quality appears to have played a role. The marine mammal water system at this facility was originally designed to use a combination of ozone and chlorine, but for several years now it has been relying entirely on chlorine to control the growth of unwanted organisms in the water, which is extremely unusual for a system of this size. Facility staff reported, and records revealed, recurring problems with respiratory issues, eye problems, and fungal infections in the dolphins during recent years. These problems correlate with the difficulty in maintaining a healthy water environment when relying on chemicals alone.

On 3/28/14 an eleven day old calf of the dolphin Ping died from traumatic injuries in the MRC pool. Medical and water records showed that there had been a spike in chlorine and ammonia at the time that had resulted in all the dolphins in the pool behaving in an agitated and erratic manner, breaching, slapping the water, and squinting. This behavior most likely explains how the calf received the traumatic injuries that resulted in its death.

On 4/18/14 a three month old calf of the dolphin Bella died from a respiratory infection. At the time of her birth it was discovered that her placenta had a fungal infection. She appeared healthy for some time, but died from a combination of a viral infection and severe bacterial pneumonia. Chlorine spikes can result in the formation of aerosolized compounds that sit above the water, and are breathed by the dolphins, resulting in increased susceptibility to respiratory disease. Other major concerns with regards to contamination of the water, and possible sources of fungal spores and bacteria: 1.) There has been a large construction project going on next to MRC for several weeks during the time these dolphin calves were present. On 3/11/14 medical records state "A large dust cloud went over MRC from the construction site this afternoon. The trainers complained of burning eyes." 2.) A sun shade over an MRC pool clearly collects dust, debris, and bird feces, and is situated so that rainfall would drain this material into the pool. There was significant rainfall at this location between 3/25/14 and 4/1/14.

The enclosures for marine mammals shall not contain water which is detrimental to their health. These two dolphin calf deaths, and the chronic problems in other dolphins with respiratory problems, eye problems, and fungal infections, are related to the water quality issues in the system used throughout the facility, and the failure to recognize the risks associated with construction projects, water run-off, and other sources of stress and contamination. The administration has now recognized these problems, and is taking the appropriate steps to revise the water system and review policies impacting the animals.

The water quality shall be maintained in a manner which is not detrimental to the health of the animals from this time forward.

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This inspection was focused on the MRC pool where two dolphin deaths occurred this year. It involved on-site inspections, record reviews, and interviews between 5/12/14 and 6/30/14.

An exit interview was conducted with facility representatives.

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